

### **Richard E. Holmes Attends Mississippi State University**

Dr. Richard E. Holmes was the first African American to attend Mississippi State University when he enrolled on July 19, 1965.

Directions: You will assume the role of a reporter for the *East Mississippi Times* when Richard E. Holmes became the first African American to attend Mississippi State University. Read an excerpt from Douglas L. Conner's account of his adopted son's enrollment (see below). Then, go to <https://vimeo.com/142654474> and view the brief documentary (4:35) about Holmes. While watching the documentary, be sure to take notes about important points.

It was at . . . [Mississippi State] university that the first dramatic integration breakthrough in the Starkville area took place . . . My adopted son, Richard Holmes, became the first black student at that institution enrolling in the second summer session of 1965 . . . When he [Richard] came home . . . he decided to take a couple of . . . courses in summer school . . . He first applied to Alcorn and Jackson State, two black state institutions. Then he decided this made no sense. Why should he have to incur the additional expense and trouble of going somewhere else when there was a college in his own hometown? He decided to apply to Mississippi State, not to integrate it but to be close to home while he took courses that summer . . . Everyone from the president [of the university] on down was determined that Mississippi State would not experience the same turmoil and bloodshed that Ole Miss had. Besides, the school depended heavily on federal funds and could not afford to jeopardize this money by tolerating anti-integration violence.

Registration day arrived, and all was in readiness. The school had arranged for a heavy police presence, and I had spoken to the county sheriff, who promised his cooperation. That morning our whole family felt the tension, but everyone was calm . . . I dropped him off in front of the Animal Husbandry Building where he was to register at 2 P.M. As he got out of the car, the only advice I gave him was: "Keep your head up." He nodded in return . . . Richard called me in several hours, and I went to get him. He told me he had encountered no difficulties. Practically no one paid any attention to him, only the presence of the extra policeman indicated that something unusual was happening. He received some stares while registering and while walking across campus to Lee Hall to pay his fees. A few students he knew spoke to him as he passed by . . . That was about it. The first black student had peacefully registered at Mississippi State University.

Excerpts from *A Black Physician's Story: Bringing Hope to Mississippi* (pages 142-146)

Using the information provided by these two sources, write your news story. Next, complete the *byline* (the name of the reporter who wrote news story, i.e., you!) by writing your name. Then, write the *lead* (the first paragraph of a news story which must answer the five questions of journalism: **who, what, where, when, how** and **why**). Finally, develop a *headline* using eight words or less. Remember: headlines must grab the reader's attention and also be accurate!

<h1><i>EAST MISSISSIPPI TIMES</i></h1>	<p><i>EXTRA! EXTRA!</i> <i>READ ALL ABOUT IT!</i></p>
<p><b>BYLINE:</b> _____</p>	
<p><b>HEADLINE:</b> _____</p>	
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